

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A pretreatment kit for saliva comprising

- (A) an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide having a concentration of 0.01 to 10 mol/L,
- (B) an aqueous solution of tartaric acid and/or citric acid having a concentration of 0.01 to 3 mol/L, and
- (C) a nonionic surface active agent and/or an amphoteric surface active agent, the component (C) being mixed with at least one of the components (A) and (B), or being provided separately from the components (A) and (B), and at least one substance selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium sulfate and manganese sulfate being contained in at least one of the components (A), (B) and (C) in an amount of 5 to 25% by weight;

wherein at least one of (A) and (C) is capable of removing aggregation caused by mucin or chain formation of streptococci mutans in saliva.

Claim 2 (Original): A pretreatment kit for saliva as claimed in claim 1, wherein (D) tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane is mixed with at least one of the components (A), (B) and (C).

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): A pretreatment kit for saliva comprising

- (A) an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide having a concentration of 0.01 to 10 mol/L,

(B) an aqueous solution of tartaric acid and/or citric acid having a concentration of 0.01 to 3 mol/L,

(C) a nonionic surface active agent and/or an amphoteric surface active agent, and

(D) an aqueous solution containing tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane,

the component (C) being mixed with at least one of the components (A), (B) and (D), or being provided separately from the components (A), (B) and (D), and

at least one substance selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium sulfate and manganese sulfate being contained in at least one of the components (A), (B), (C) and (D) in an amount of 5 to 25% by weight.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A pretreatment kit for saliva as claimed in claim 1, ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~, wherein the nonionic surface active agent as the component (C) is one kind or a mixture of two or more kinds selected from the group consisting of polyethylene glycol monooctylphenyl ether, n-octyl- $\beta$ -D-glucoside, n-heptyl- $\beta$ -D-thioglucoside, n-octyl- $\beta$ -D-thioglucoside, nonylphenoxy polyethoxyethanol and polyoxyethylene sorbitan monooleate.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): A pretreatment kit for saliva as claimed in claim 1, ~~one of claims 1 to 4~~, wherein the amphoteric surface active agent as the component (C) is at least one agent ~~one kind or a mixture of two or more kinds~~ selected from the group consisting of CHAPS (3-(3-cholamide-propyl)-dimethylammonio)-1-propanesulfonate) and CHAPSO (3-(3-cholamide-propyl)-dimethylammonio)-1-hydroxypropanesulfonate).

Claim 6 (Withdrawn, Currently Amended): A pretreatment method for saliva in identification and quantitative determination of streptococci mutans ~~streptococci~~ by immunochromatography comprising steps of

mixing at least one substance selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium sulfate and manganese sulfate with at least one of (A) an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide having a concentration of 0.01 to 10 mol/L, (B) an aqueous solution of tartaric acid and/or citric acid having a concentration of 0.01 to 3 mol/L, and (C) a nonionic surface active agent and/or an amphoteric surface active agent, in an amount of 5 to 25% by weight; and

mixing the components (A), (B) and (C) by dropping in an arbitrary order.

Claim 7 (Withdrawn): A pretreatment method for saliva as claimed in claim 6, wherein (D) tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane is mixed in at least one of the components (A), (B) and (C), and the components (A), (B) and (C) are mixed by dropping in such an order that the component (A) is in contact with the component (B) in the presence of the component (D).

Claim 8 (Withdrawn, Currently Amended): A pretreatment method for saliva in identification and quantitative determination of streptococci mutans ~~streptococci~~ by immunochromatography comprising steps of

mixing at least one substance selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium sulfate and manganese sulfate with at least one of (A) an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide having a concentration of 0.01 to 10 mol/L and (B) an aqueous solution of tartaric acid and/or citric acid having a concentration of 0.01 to 3 mol/L, in an amount of 5 to 25% by weight;

mixing (C) a nonionic surface active agent and/or an amphoteric surface active agent in at least one of the components (A) and (B); and

mixing the components (A) and (B) by dropping in an arbitrary order.

Claim 9 (Withdrawn): A pretreatment method for saliva as claimed in claim 8, wherein (D) tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane is mixed in at least one of the components (A) and (B), and the components (A) and (B) are mixed by dropping in an arbitrary order.

Claim 10 (Withdrawn; Currently Amended): A pretreatment method for saliva in identification and quantitative determination of streptococci mutans ~~streptococci~~ by immunochromatography comprising steps of

mixing at least one substance selected from the group consisting of sodium chloride, potassium chloride, calcium chloride, magnesium chloride, magnesium sulfate and manganese sulfate with at least one of (A) an aqueous solution of sodium hydroxide having a concentration of 0.01 to 10 mol/L, (B) an aqueous solution of tartaric acid and/or citric acid having a concentration of 0.01 to 3 mol/L, (C) a nonionic surface active agent and/or an amphoteric surface active agent, and (D) tris(hydroxymethyl)aminomethane, in an amount of 5 to 25% by weight; and

mixing the components (A), (B), (C) and (D) by dropping in such an order that the component (A) is in contact with the component (B) in the presence of the component (D).

Claim 11 (Withdrawn): A pretreatment method for saliva as claimed in claim 10, wherein the component (A), (B) and (D), at least one of which is mixed with the component (C), are mixed by dropping in such an order that the component (A) is in contact with the component (B) in the presence of the component (D).